

L E T T E R

FROM THE

Honest Protestant Dissenters

To a Rt. Revd.

Occasional Friend.



L O N D O N:

Printed in the Year. 1702.

Rev. Revd. and our Singular good L.

IT is with inexpressible Satisfaction, that we receive daily Advice of your L—ps unwearied endeavours, in the behalf of that poor little Flock, who cannot bring their Consciences to comply with the Constitution of the Church by Law Established.

We are sensible how much it is owing to the unexampled moderation of your L—p, and those of your Brethren whom you Influence, that we first obtained our *Toleration*, and have under your L—ps Countenance, enjoyed greater Liberty than we could have expected, even from the Courtesy of the Law.

We had no right to hope for so great Compassion in your L—p, as to stretch out a favourable hand to support a sinking Cause : but to Sacrifice on our behalf what the World would have thought most dear to you ; to postpone your own Honour and Authority to our Ease and Interest ; to prefer the Convenience of Strangers before the Rights of your own Sons ; to stand the Displeasure of the most Powerful Party in the Nation, and even of the Queen her self ; and all this only to Skreen those that never endeavour'd to deserve any share in your regard : This (my L—d) is what we cannot sufficiently admire, and if we fail in expressing our Sense of it, 'tis because our Gratitude, like the *Tarpeian* Maid in the History, is overwhelmed and even buried under your L—p's bounty.

But your L—p's after all your past Favours have surpriz'd us with a fresh Instance of your unalterable Zeal for our Interest, by opposing the Bill of *Conformity*, now depending in P——t.

My L—d, it must be confessed, that an opposition to this Bill at first View, seems to serve our Interest and gratifie our Wishes ; for your L——ps, who were not ignorant by what Craft some Men get their Wealth, might justly think it hard upon them, to break the
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Antient Alliance between Godliness and Gain; and it had been an unreasonable expectation in us, that Occasional Conformity might in good time have introduced Occasional Episcopacy.

But my L——d, without derogating from the grateful Sense we have of your L——ps kind Inclinations, we hope we may take leave to acquaint your L——p, if we are not ambitious to be obliged in this manner: We neither love the Traytor nor the Treason. It has been said, that the Church of *England* was a persecuting Church; it was indeed by one, who owns himself addicted naturally to Lying; but it is not inconsistent with that Character, to speak some occasional Truths, and this is one in our Opinion: We cannot but desire to live easy under this or any other Church, if we must be under; but we would not obtain our ease by such scandalous Hypocrisy as ought to have no benefit of Clergy. Non-conformity, that good Old-Cause, is to us like a good old Master whom we have long served, and are not yet inclined to desert; and tho' we were, yet the art of betraying him dexterously, has not been yet communicated to us by any of our *Scotch* Brethren.

Our apparent Simplicity has hitherto been our Chiefest Strength; and we have subsisted by perswading the World, That tho' we might be mistaken, yet that we were honest in our meaning. It requires more Learning, more Travel and Experience in Foreign Courts, than we are able to pretend to, to make such Dissimulation practicable, tho' your L——p should contrive to make it Lawful: Neither need we be otherwise concerned to be against this Bill, than as it may disable us from answering some occasional Recommendations from your L——ps.

Could we indeed find a B——p, who were willing to employ his interest to Dissolve this P——t, and labour for the choice of New Members, by those honourable and pious Methods that have lately been pursued, that is not so Bigotted to Episcopacy, as to be unwilling to wave the Apostolical Right of it, nor so attached to a dead Form of Prayer, as not to exercise his Gifts upon occasion, to

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an Old Ladies Constitution; Could we find, I say, such a B—— might then hope to tread upon the Neck of the Establishment, and to carry our interest to as high a pitch, as our very Wishes could suggest. The Life of such a Prelate would deserve to be written by himself, nor need his Book fear the Fate of meaner pastoral Compositions.

But we are not willing to put your L——p upon any of these difficult Enterprizes, being sensible you may be very serviceable to us on easier Terms: we would rather recommend to you the pursuit of some other less obnoxious Methods, which like white Powder, may be Execution without noise. Your endeavours in the Pulpit, and from the Press, have been more Successful than in the P——t House, and a Book whether for or against us, may do that Service, which a Speech for us cannot.

Go on My L——d, we beseech you, and may you prosper in these less hardy undertakings, by which you have already acquired some small Reputation; but set not your L——ps Sh—ld—rs, broad as they are, against the weight of a whole Nation, nor believe it worth your while, to engage in a preposterous Opposition, which in all probability will be unsuccessful, and tho' it should chance to prove fortunate, will give you no title to the thanks of

My L——d,

Your L—ps most unworthy Favourites.

Decemb. 21.

1702.

The Honest Protestant Dissenters

